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## Take a LIVE virtual skilled trades tour in Grand Rapids

*Talent Investment Agency, Under the Radar to showcase skilled trades careers*

**MARCH 23, 2016** – Students, parents and job-seekers in Michigan and around the world will get a firsthand look at careers in IT and skilled trades on Thursday, March 24 from 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. EDT as part of a partnership between the Michigan Talent Investment Agency (TIA) and Tom Daldin, host of the PBS television program “Under the Radar Michigan.”

The partnership is part of an ongoing initiative on behalf of the Talent Investment Agency and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to encourage skilled trades as a career option and address perceptions about the jobs available.

Skilled trades are some of the most in-demand jobs, with more than 8,300 job openings in Michigan today. That number will continue to grow, with more than 6,700 job openings expected every year through 2022. However, many students and parents associate skilled trades with low paying, low skill or dirty jobs.

Tom Daldin will use a real-time virtual tour platform, Georama, to show a day in the life of skilled trades talent in the IT industry. Going live from CQL Corp. in Grand Rapids, the event will provide a full-scope of what each position entails, clients they work with and training required for success. Viewers can visit <http://mitalent.org/skilled-trades-live> to tune in live.

“Skilled trades jobs have evolved and they are good-paying, sustainable and high-tech career opportunities,” said Stephanie Comai, director of the Michigan Talent Investment Agency. “However, the perception of these jobs is still outdated. We are excited to use Georama to let students and parents experience what skilled trades jobs really are. Bridging the skills gap is one of Gov. Rick Snyder’s top priorities. Georama is an innovative tool that will help Michigan achieve that goal.”

The live stream will highlight various people and positions at CQL Corp. including Tom Stoepker, software engineer and mobile developer; Aubrey Baker, software developer; Mark Loew, database developer; and Megan Sall, project manager. Students from the Kent County Career Tech center will also be involved. Each candidate will spend time providing visual examples of what they do and walking the viewers through their daily routines. There will then be time for questions after the demonstrations where viewers can engage with Tom Daldin in real-time.

Georama allows two-way interactivity, where participants can ask questions and respond to the guide operating the live stream camera. This real-time broadcast will allow viewers to experience and understand a skilled trades position within the IT industry through their computer or mobile phone, ask questions and offer suggestions to Tom on where to go and what to see next.

"I'm really excited about the partnership between the Michigan Talent Investment Agency and Georama," said Tom Daldin. "This interactive internet technology is a great way share and communicate information to the world, and I can't wait to talk about all the opportunities we have right here in Michigan in skilled trades."

For more information about skilled trades in Michigan, visit <http://www.mitalent.org/skilled-trades/>.

The Talent Investment Agency was created in March 2015, to address the gap between workers with the right skills and employers in need of highly skilled workers. Visit <http://www.michigan.gov/tia> for more information.

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